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OSI-S-240/68

10 December 1968

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Surveyor

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Soviet Scientists Admit Possible Errors In Venus 4 Radar Altimeter Data: Soviet scientists at the International Symposium on Moon and Planet Physics (Kiev, USSR, 15-22 October) presented data from the Venus 4 probe with extrapolations from the point at which transmissions ceased down to the surface of Venus. In a private conversation at the symposium, a Soviet scientist verified suspicions of US scientists that design of the Venus 4 radar altimeter rendered this instrument susceptible to errors of a factor of two in altitude readings. For example, at 50 km above the surface, the altimeter probably recorded an altitude of 25 km. [redacted]

Comment: The Soviet presentation and remarks clearly indicate that many Soviet astronomers actually do not accept their public position that Venus 4 transmitted data all the way to the surface of Venus. Analyses of the radar and Mariner 5 data lead to the conclusion that Venus 4 transmission ceased at an altitude of about 25 km above the planet's surface. [redacted]

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